

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : General Bull

DATE: 9 April 1954

FROM : R. W. Komer

SUBJECT: Reactions to Proposed O/RR Approach to the Guided Missiles Estimate

1. The proposed O/RR approach seems eminently sound in concept, and something along this line will have to be done before a complete and adequate intelligence estimate of the Soviet guided missile threat can be produced. However, I seriously question whether the present state of our intelligence is such that we can at this point usefully embark on such an approach.

2. In essence O/RR recommends that, "for a meaningful estimate to be produced, a number of possible Soviet guided missile systems must be examined . . ." Thus once we have completed the technical estimate of Soviet research and development, we should:

- a. develop a set of military requirements "for various guided missiles systems, i.e. for air defense, attack on US, etc. These requirements should be framed in terms of specific numbers of weapons and launching sites required, time period in which required, etc. This would be done for us by the military.
- b. From each of these specific requirements, a detailed "bill of materials" would be calculated, i.e. precisely how much of each component of such weapons and supporting facilities would be needed. This would also be done by the military.
- c. Once the above steps had been completed, the economists would examine Soviet economic capabilities to fill each "bill of materials" in terms of industrial impact, investment costs, etc.
- d. Finally in the light of estimated Soviet economic capabilities to meet the various posited military requirements, the economists would estimate the impact of economic factors on actual Soviet intentions to produce each of the posited weapons systems.

3. I completely agree that at some point we will have to go through this type of exercise before we can arrive at the most meaningful estimate of the Soviet guided missiles threat. However, I see several difficulties in undertaking such a complex and time consuming analysis at this time:

- a. I seriously doubt whether our reexamination of the available intelligence on Soviet GM development will yield sufficient precise data on this subject to permit the construction of

realistic "military requirements." Indeed it seems likely that in most GM fields the Soviets are far from reaching the stage where even they themselves would start to calculate their "requirements" for such weapons systems. Thus the O/RR approach might be somewhat premature until we have improved our present GM intelligence (which is what the present NIE is really supposed to do). Any "requirements" constructed before we have more knowledge might be so artificial as to involve a great deal of wasted effort.

- b. Second, from previous experience I greatly question whether we could get the Pentagon people to present us with even a rough set of "requirements" for various GM weapons systems, much less a detailed "bill of materials." Thus it may be unrealistic to expect this.
- c. Finally, the proposed O/RR approach would probably involve a major delay in the present schedule for completion of the NIE. It could not really get under way until two prior parts of the NIE were completed, i.e. the research and development estimate, and the subsequent formulation of the hypothetical "military requirement" and "bill of materials" for various weapons systems.
- d. Additional delay would result from the sheer complexity of the proposed O/RR analysis. I am sure O/RR would agree that to do this job right would require at least 3-4 months. Thus assuming that a similar period is required to complete the R and D estimate and another month or so to prepare military requirements, (and at least a month for the finished NIE), a total of around 8-12 months would be needed to produce the final NIE, thus putting us far behind the present Third Quarter completion date.

4. It may be just possible, as an alternative, to use some very rough orders of magnitude for the probable Soviet "requirements" and "bills of material" and thus do a very rough feasibility analysis. This could be explored with the military, and if necessary we could even make some arbitrary assumptions ourselves. However, the question arises as to whether such rough approximations would be sufficiently realistic as to form the basis for a useful analysis by O/RR.

5. Therefore, I would recommend that in this initial estimate at least we postpone the more complex type of economic estimate proposed by O/RR and proceed with a more limited estimate which would also be more within our present intelligence capabilities and time schedule. Such an initial estimate would include an economic capabilities section, but only in more general (and admittedly less satisfactory) terms. I am sure that O/RR would agree that such an estimate

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would still be "meaningful" in that any new look at Soviet GM capabilities will be an improvement over the present situation and would be an indispensable preliminary to the more complex type of estimate O/RR suggests.

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